

What Difference Does Prohibition Make to Texas?

By J. O. Abernethy

Houston, Texas.

"THERE'LL always be booze in Texas."

This is the bald statement of a Department of Justice agent of South Texas, whose specialty since the enactment of prohibition laws has been running down bootleggers.

"What about July 1—everything goes dry then?" he was asked.

"There's Mexico," was the reply. "Already some booze has been traced across the Rio Grande into this country. Of course, we'll get some of them, but"—

He ended with a significant shrug of his shoulders.

Booze has found its way, and, for that matter, continues to find its way into Texas in many and surprising fashions. So clever are the tricks of the bootlegging trade that the Department of Justice agents are forever on the jump keeping track of them. Here's some of the many ways it has been brought in—with disastrous results for the illegal tradesmen:

In a coffin, accompanied by a "relative" of the supposed deceased, a small fortune in quart bottles of really good stuff was found. The "body" was interred in the liquor storeroom of a Federal building, services being conducted by the United States Marshal, the custodian of the building and several officers.

Inner Tube

Five gallons of whiskey was discovered in the inner tube of a spare automobile tire. A "puncture" in this instance was responsible for the apprehension of the motorist.

Suspicious officers on searching a drunken negro in hunting garb found eight pints of whiskey in what was apparently a hunting belt.

Another "hunter" nabbed by the Federal agents carried a copper lined leather gun case, which contained four gallons of high grade booze. There was no gun.

Among the latest styles in bootlegger garments brought to the attention of Uncle Sam's sleuths was a canvas belt fitted with twelve inside pockets, each of which contained a pint flask when its owner was challenged and searched.

Hot water bottles have not been overlooked in the quest for suitable containers such as would allay the suspicions of the watchful officers. A trunk full of hot water bottles, each containing about a quart of whiskey, was discovered in a baggage room at Houston. Its owner never appeared to claim his valuable baggage.

Even acetylene gas tanks—big copper affairs—have been used. The results were good until one super-suspicious officer found one of them to contain the type of illuminating gas commonly termed booze, and thereafter the innocent appearing gas tanks were subjected to rigid inspection.

Some Gas!

Baled hay has also been used to advantage. Frequently large supplies of "bottled in bond" have been discovered beneath tremendous piles of hay which was being brought to market. Bottles of whiskey have also been found secreted within the bales themselves.

False bottoms in trunks, oil cans,

milk cans and other containers afforded a means for transporting many gallons of whiskey without discovery.

One Texas garageman, while talking to an officer, placed a gasoline can he was carrying on the sidewalk. In the middle of an animated argument over the league of nations or religion or something a passerby kicked the can over. A cork in the bottom of it was dislocated and a gallon or more of good, smelly whiskey poured over the sidewalk. The officer sniffed wistfully, then did his duty. The can is being kept as a souvenir.

Divided gas tanks in motor cars have also been used with more or less success by bootleggers, as well as special and inaccessible compartments beneath the front seats, cowls, hoods and everywhere else where there was enough room to store a few pints or quarts.

Thousands of trunks, suitcases and bags of various descriptions have been taken into custody by the government officials, who meet all trains from adjoining wet states. In cases where travelling bags were being carried by individuals arrests usually resulted, except when the bootleggers outran the officers and lost themselves in the crowds.

With Woman's Help

The bootlegger's best card in evading the officers has been through the use of women accomplices, the Department of Justice men say.

"Fancy," said one of them, "asking a well dressed, sedate appearing woman to have the porter deposit her three or four suitcases on the station platform to be searched for liquor! It's a ticklish business, but we've caught many of them at it. In most instances we worked on tips from other places, and were tolerably certain we had the right ones. However, it's a safe bet that many more than we caught have got by with it."

The women, according to the officers, are generally met by men of the business type, who come in automobiles and greet them warmly as visiting relatives or friends.

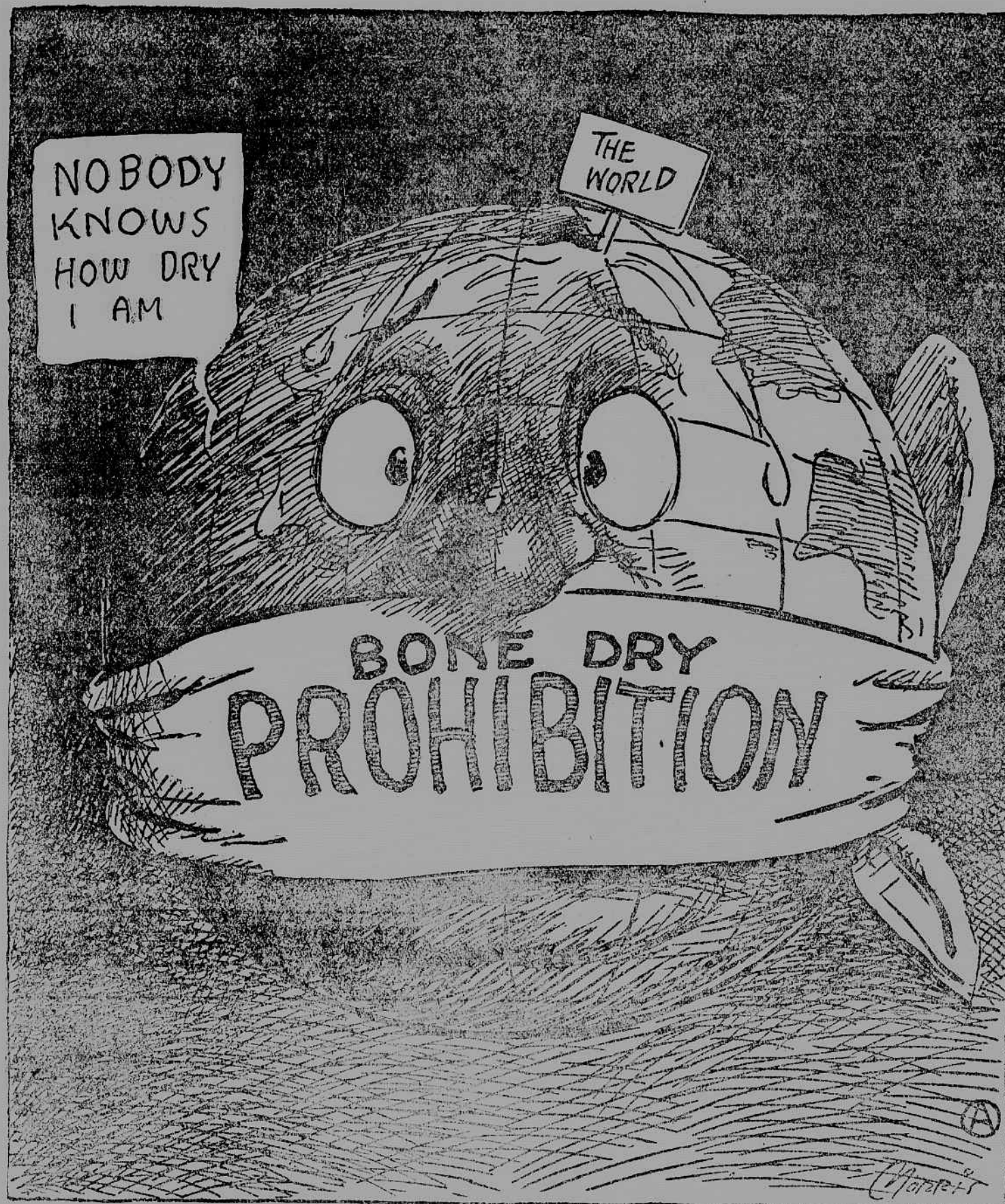
One prominent man of Southern Texas endeavored to bring in between \$200,000 and \$300,000 (bootlegger prices) worth of liquor from New Orleans in his yacht. Working on a tip, the officers seized the liquor in the Gulf of Mexico and the case is to be tried in the Federal district court at Houston.

One of the favored ways of bringing in whiskey is to trust it to train porters, who deposit it at a designated spot outside the city limits of the city to which it is consigned. There eager hands await it. By watching the railroad sidings near city limits the officers have been able to swoop down on many bootleggers in the act of making away with the liquor. Not a few porters have been implicated.

An attempted wholesale liquor robbery from an interstate shipment passing through Houston cost the life of one Houston brakeman. His partner, also a brakeman, was captured the following day and received a long sentence in the penitentiary.

The officers received a tip that two men were rolling off barrels of whiskey from a freight train en route to Galveston as it moved slowly out of the Englewood yards.

Mighty Little, According to News Here Printed. The World, As the Cartoonist Pictures, Goes Bone Dry; but Texas Has Discovered a System---and Some System!



From The Fargo Courier-News

When the officers arrived at the scene the bootleggers were preparing to bury about six barrels they had rolled from the train. The officer called to them to surrender, but the brakeman, who was afterward killed, opened fire. During the confusion the other escaped, but

was taken into custody the following day.

What Becomes of It

And what becomes of all the "evidence" in these cases? In every Federal building there is an improvised storeroom where all the

seized liquor is placed to await court order. After its value as evidence has been disposed of it is sold by court order to druggists, physicians and manufacturers authorized to use alcohol. And thereby hangs a tale.

Drug stores having liquor licenses

have been doing a land office business for many months. Drugs, for them, have been a secondary matter. Certain physicians have been writing liquor prescriptions by the wholesale without even the faintest play at giving the applicants the physical examination required by

law. Despite the serving of injunctions restraining them from issuing such prescriptions without complying with the law, they have gone merrily on with their lucrative business.

One Houston physician issued as high as 250 liquor prescriptions in one day, and a few others were not far behind him. In Houston alone there were five drug stores selling whiskey, wines and other intoxicating liquors on prescriptions issued by more than ten physicians.

On the eve of a grand jury indictment one of the physicians departed for New York with his family. He announced that he would remain there for some time and take a post-graduate course in medicine.

"I rather think my departure will peeve the grand jury," he said shortly before he departed. "However, it can't be helped. My trip simply can't be postponed."

This physician was among the leaders in writing liquor prescriptions and amassed a small fortune in this way.

The favorite excuse of the applicants for such prescriptions was that they were convalescing from the influenza and needed whiskey and wines to build up their strength. All of which indicates that the "flu" was a godsend to many who otherwise would have gone thirsty.

With the approach of national prohibition, however, there is a tendency among the druggists and physicians to climb onto the prohibition bandwagon while the climbing is good. Some of them are, therefore, relinquishing their liquor licenses or prescription writing privileges, whichever the case may be. In Houston two drug stores have given up their licenses, maintaining to the last, however, the beneficial effects of alcohol for rubbing and medicinal purposes.

Just Across the Border

Some bold bloods among the liquor men of Texas are planning to make Brownsville the most important city in Texas by establishing saloons across the border and conducting horse races and other gambling devices. An extensive advertising campaign is being planned. It is understood. Operations will be started when the nation goes dry.

Whiskey in Texas brings almost any price the bootlegger names. It has been said that bootleggers are so thick they have to wear badges to keep from taking up each others' time in attempting sales. While this is a bit exaggerated, there is still enough liquor in Texas for those who want it and can afford to pay the exorbitant prices as there ever was, thanks to the bootlegger. The only thing a person needs to get liquor is the money and the knowledge of where to get it. Lacking the latter, any motor car driver, pool room loafer, waiter, bellhop, porter or other menial can furnish that. In other words, Texas is only technically dry.

Beer, the 2% per cent stuff, is still being manufactured and sold in many places. The beer traffic has come to be like the hydra of fairy tale fame. Serve an injunction on one beer saloon restraining it from operating, and another opens up immediately. Bottled beer is sold at from 25 to 35 cents, generally 35. As injunctions have to come from Austin, there is always a con-

venient number of these thirst parlor open.

Speaking of these beer saloons, they are picturesque places. When some bright brewery lawyer discovered that through some technicality in the law beer could be sold without much of a risk, all the old saloons were prospering as soft drink parlors and restaurants. Consequently, old storerooms, billiard parlors, cleaning and pressing shops and vacant buildings of all descriptions had to be converted into temporary bars.

Planks nailed together and placed across carpenters' horses formed the bar. Wash tubs filled with ice served to cool the brew, which was unnecessary, for the eager crowds were perfectly willing to drink it warm. The principal thing was to get it. Some of the shops were upstairs, some on main streets in the business section, while others were in tumble-down buildings and holes-in-the-wall on remote side streets. Sawdust was scattered on the rough floors and upturned barrels did service as tables.

All prospered, however. Even the proprietors of the lowliest of these joints discussed plans for summer vacations in Colorado and elsewhere if only they were allowed to keep open a few more weeks.

Every one who can't afford it and many who can't have laid in large stores of beers and liquors against the impending drouth. This has become one of the most popular indoor sports in Texas. When the ten-mile zone law closed the saloons the surplus of supplies was absorbed into private homes, where it now lies, or, that is, part of it. There was hardly any left over after the last grand rush.

One prominent Houstonian purchased a barrel of fine old stuff for his own use, paying nearly \$1,000 for it. The story is told that, after carefully putting it under lock and key, his wife became wise to the proceedings and had a carpenter bore a hole up through the bottom of the house and into the barrel to get rid of it. She directed the operations and personally saw that none of it was salvaged.

Many Houstonians are seemingly anxious lest some other person discover a suitable substitute for whiskey before they do.

Every person appears to have his own recipe for making beverages with the oldtime kick. The most popular recipe consists of pouring boiling water over raisins, allowing them to ferment a week or more and then adding grape juice. The result is said to be quite exhilarating. Recipes for corn whiskey like grandfather used to make are also appearing.

Advertisements from a mail order house giving an alluring prospectus of a recipe for a drink that has a "kick like a mule and a taste like nectar" have been received in Houston. There was a lengthy sucker list.

"No home should be without one of our stills" is the substance of another advertisement that has received acknowledgment from a number of Houstonians.

And, speaking of stills, Texas bids fair to rival Kentucky some day, despite the latter's handicap of a century or more. Federal officers have already located one, and have their eye on several more.

How Are You Going to Celebrate the Fourth This Year?

By Russel M. Crouse

THE Fourth of July proclamation, as inevitable and unescapable as the day itself, has been duly signed by John E. Hylan and is properly filed away among his other literary efforts. The day is to be "safe and sane," the proclamation announces by way of proof that Fourth of July proclamations are immune from the evolution of the times.

Alienists never have been called upon to explain, in answer to hypothetical interrogations, just what the symptoms of insanity are on Fourth of July. Therefore there is something of a mystery in the conjecture as to the manner in which New York will celebrate the day long defeated to combustion—the first day of the sort it has reached with the spirit of the triumph of war pent up inside and most of the Liberty boys of the new days back home.

When noise was produced by fire water and not fireworks no one insisted on a strict interpretation of the expression throughout all the years the nation was celebrating something which happened in 1776.

Legally, New York cannot become very excited. There is a law on the city's books which is so stringent

that if, between the hours of 12 and 12 on the fourth day of the seventh month of the year one lights more than three sulphur matches in succession he is quite likely to find himself being led to the calaboose by one of Richard Enright's knights of the nightstick.

There are other spots which are not quite so strict, and if the wind is from the west on that date the city may be able to hear the sounds of cracking crackers; or, if the fog rises to an altruistic altitude, one may be able to journey to a house-top and, with the aid of strong glasses, catch the reflection of the rocket's red glare in Orange, N. J., or Rye, N. Y., which still will be on the map despite the death tom-toms of intendants which will beat four days in advance of Independence Day.

It is even whispered here and there that there are some, who have been shopping on the Jersey side, who have hidden away in the attic—the cellar being full of internal fireworks—a pinwheel or two and a couple of the candles of old Rome in the hope that the police will be too busy chasing safe-splitters and pluck-pockets to see a little backyard celebration, or, seeing, will be

full enough of the spirit of war triumph to be lenient, or too full of something else even to see.

If New York does celebrate its Fourth merely by the reading of the Declaration of Independence, or the fourteen points of the covenant of the league of nations, or one of Mayor Hylan's essays, it is going to miss a few things in the way of pyrotechnic display, and the statement is made not to incite any to trample under foot the statute, but merely as a matter of fact.

Crackers From China

In the first place, China has sent over enough old-fashioned bang-bang crackers to make the Battle of the Marne sound like the hour of taps at the Old Soldiers' Home. Not all of the fireworks marked "Made in China" are manufactured in Pennsylvania. Some of them actually come from the land where gunpowder was invented or discovered or whatever it was. For instance, one Jersey firm has imported \$250,000 worth from that nation, and one can well imagine the vast supply of fireworks that can be bought with \$250,000.

Persons who like to sleep late in the morning will testify that New

York can get along well without its share of the little red things, but it isn't fireworks alone that New York is missing.

The war's effect on the fireworks market has been remarkable. If you are to believe that all of the things advertised as having been used by the armies of the United States and the Allies actually were touched off over in France and Belgium then you must doubt some of the stories of raids in the dark, for there couldn't possibly have been any dark.

All of them have been transported to this country and their fangs have been extracted, so that a child can operate.

If you are at all disappointed that you didn't get into the war, or that you didn't get "over there," a sponge for your tears will be found in any fireworks catalogue of 1919.

At the foot of the front porch this year one can plant a "Very signal," of which "millions were used on the front lines" (see catalogue). Or perhaps one might want to peek into his neighbor's backyard, for which nothing could be better than a "position light," which, the booklet will inform you, was used in "vast quantities by the army for lighting up the enemy's defence."

There's a touch of naval life in the star shells, for the NC-4, when it bridged the briny, found each destroyer station because each tossed those same star shells into the air

at fixed intervals. The thrills of the aviator may be brought to your yard with parachute rockets of red, green, white and amber, but the amber may remind you of a certain liquid you are trying to forget.

If the police happen to drop around about that time it would be well to have on hand a "smoke curtain," used so effectively at the Zebrugge naval engagement. While the policeman fought his way through the waves of smoke one might easily hide the remaining sparklets and whatnots.

The Flavor of War

There is no record that the Allies fought with fountains in the late struggle, but they're in the catalogue—"Allies' Fountains," a waterfall of sparks and their close relatives. A "Pershing Battery" also is to be had, or a "Peace Rocket," or a "Fighting Dreadnought," which booms out sharp reports in much the same fashion that the bigger ones did in the Jutland engagement.

For a nominal price a picture of General Pershing or Marshal Foch or Senator Root may be flashed upon the dark background of the night, with every feature sizzling with sparks. If you'll submit a photograph, the picture might as well be that of him for whom the service flag hung in the old front window, for any of the big companies will be able to make it up on a few hours' notice.

Turning from things martial, the

catalogue offers everything that is beautiful and sublime in the way of pyrotechnic twists and turns, if they can reach those heights, and some things which are suggestive of neither, such as "diving devils," "Vesuvian eruptions," "fiery waltzers," "devil-among-the-tailors" or "whistling coons."

One can take a stroll through nature's own garden and see "weeping willows," "floating festoons," "chrysanthemum bombs," "a golden bouquet of herbs," "a floral fountain," "a silver birch tree" or a "water lily." There's a "pyric cascade" and a "fiery geyser." For light you have the "brilliant sun" or a "jewelled jet." Above are "flying pigeons" and "flying tourbillons," although probably few would recognize that rare species. Along the ground "spreading peacocks" strut and "sizzling snakes" creep.

"Neath 'Aladdin's Jewelled tree," while the waters of an "Aztec fountain" play near by, "Jack-in-the-box" may woo and win the "Queen of the Air" and tie a "Lover's knot"—all in fireworks.

There are rockets galore—variegated, Bengal, hanging, salute and many other sorts. The rocket has been developed to such a degree that one company has brought forth one that by fuses well timed will set forth eighteen successive clusters of stars. Wheels, too, are plentiful and of various kinds—rosette, pin, vertical, triangle, rainbow, furlions

(sounds like a breakfast food), sun, horizontal and electric.

The glow of many colored fires is on sale. The delicate shades of heliotrope or circus lemonade pink or Hylan red—every color except black, it would be safe to say. Fire doesn't come in black.

Punk

And there's a little item which appears quite frequently on the pyrotechnic menu, which for years has been the "ugly duckling" of all Fourth of July celebrations and yet is indispensable. It is in every plot, although quite unobtrusive. It is always starting something, although quite the most quiet guest at the party. It is punk. New York, with its drastic law, may be forced to celebrate the day with punk, and it could do so without losing the spirit of the occasion for a moment.

The manufacturers have not forgotten the finale in all their preparations. Blazing mottoes are for sale which could be to the celebration just what "Home, Sweet Home" is to the dance. They can say "Good Night" or the more poetic "Au Revoir" or "Till We Meet Again" or "Subway Two Blocks West" or "Oh, You Kid!" or most anything else epigrammatical.

But Mayor Hylan's proclamation, after stipulating that the day shall be safe and sane, says:

"Explosives are not necessary for a proper celebration of the day. Their use is dangerous and prohibited by law. The police will see

to it that the law in this regard is observed."

So New Yorkers may gather around the library lamp and revel in the illustrations of the catalogue, Pages 6, 8 and 13 of which are recommended highly.

Our ancestors of Colonial days did not worry over the danger or cost of fireworks. The following extract from an old "Almanach Littéraire," published in Paris in the year 1780, describes the elaborate displays of pyrotechnic art then in vogue:

"The celebration of the anniversary of the Alliance of the United States of America septentrional with France, delayed by the absence of General Washington, was at last celebrated at Pluckemin. The fête was opened by thirteen shots from cannon, and commenced with an elegant dinner. In the evening there was a superb display of fireworks—the setting was a temple 100 feet long and of a proportionate height. Above the frontispiece towered thirteen arches, each one of which displayed a different masterpiece of pyrotechnic art.

"After the fireworks, the guests returned to the festival room and the celebration ended with a splendid ball—and the news that Congress had just received the adhesion of the Spanish branch of the Bourbons was announced in the midst of the celebration and added more animation to the pleasure that inspired the occasion."